In the Claims

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings of the claims.

1.-23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A proximity warning system for a fireplace, the system comprising:

a monitor module coupled to the fireplace to automatically turn on to sense when an object enters a zone proximate to the fireplace; and

an alarm module coupled to the monitor module to generate an alarm when the monitor module sends a signal to the alarm module indicating that the object has entered the zone.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the monitor module is configured to measure capacitance to sense when the object has entered the zone.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, where the system includes a plurality of monitor modules coupled to the fireplace.

27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the alarm module is configured to vary an intensity of the alarm depending on a distance within the zone between the object and the fireplace.

28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24, wherein a size of the zone can be varied by a user of the fireplace.

29. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 24, wherein the monitor module is configured to automatically turn on when the fireplace reaches ~~a given~~ an unsafe temperature.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) A fireplace including a proximity warning system, the fireplace comprising:

an enclosure defining a combustion chamber and including at least one exposed surface;

a plate coupled to the at least one exposed surface and including a conductive area;

a capacitance module electrically coupled to the conductive area and tunable to match a capacitance of the conductive area; and

an alarm module electrically coupled to the capacitance module to generate an alarm when an object enters a zone proximate the fireplace and thereby cause the capacitance of the conductive area to vary with respect to a capacitance of the capacitance module.

32. (Previously Presented) The fireplace of claim 31, wherein the fireplace includes a plurality of exposed surfaces and a plurality of plates coupled to the plurality of exposed surfaces.

33. (Previously Presented) The fireplace of claim 31, wherein the system is configured to automatically turn on.

34. (Previously Presented) The fireplace of claim 33, wherein the system is configured to automatically turn on when the fireplace reaches a given temperature.

35. (Previously Presented) The fireplace of claim 34, wherein the given temperature is an unsafe temperature.

36. (Previously Presented) A method for warning when an object approaches a fireplace, the method comprising:

turning on a monitor module automatically;

monitoring a zone proximate to the fireplace; and

generating an alarm when an object enters the zone.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, further comprising varying a size of the zone.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[36]] 37, wherein the turning on step further comprises turning on the monitor module automatically when the fireplace reaches a given temperature.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38, wherein the turning on step further comprises turning on the monitor module automatically when the fireplace reaches an unsafe temperature.